



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17124-0001

November 1, 2010

Dear Stakeholder,

Over the past few months, serious concerns have been raised about the use of alcoholic energy drinks, which are alcohol products that also contain caffeine, taurine, guarana, ginkgo biloba, ginseng or other chemicals or herbal stimulants, and their impact on consumers, specifically young adults on college campuses across the country.

With developing research indicating that these products, many times referred to as alcopops, pose a significant threat to the health of all Pennsylvanians, we are urging consumers to exercise extreme caution with these types of beverages, specifically Four Loko, and have also asked our licensed establishments, manufacturers and suppliers to cease any marketing, promotion and sale of these types of beverages.

Growing evidence suggests that alcohol mixed with caffeine poses serious public health risks. Research shows that frequent consumers of caffeinated energy drinks tend to drink greater quantities of alcohol. As these products are then advertised to the public, it is often suggested that they are "stimulating," fueling the popular but incorrect notion that drunkenness may be averted by mixing caffeine with alcohol, even when the level of intoxication is extreme. This inaccurate perception by the consumer may potentially increase the likelihood of driving while intoxicated or alcohol poisoning.

What many do not realize is that these alcoholic energy drinks can contain as much as 12 percent alcohol in one 23.5 ounce can, which is equivalent to drinking five or six beers. They are often flavored in a way that masks the taste of alcohol and they are very economical. For instance, Four Loko sells for as little as \$2.50 per 23.5 ounce can, making it easy to understand why they are popular among young adults.

Referred to as "liquid cocaine" or "blackout in a can" by many young people, the appeal of these products is growing rapidly and having devastating and sometimes deadly effects on the consumer. And while these products are not new, they are generating headlines. For instance, recently in rural Lancaster County, dozens of people sought emergency medical treatment after drinking alcoholic energy drinks and in Washington State, nine college students were hospitalized with alcohol poisoning after mixing alcoholic energy drinks with other types of alcohol.


Producers and distributors of these products have come under heavy criticism and government scrutiny for marketing efforts that may be designed to entice underage or binge drinking. In fact, several state attorneys general have launched investigations into whether such AEDs, including Four Loko, are being improperly marketed to underage consumers.

The Federal Food and Drug Administration also continues to investigate this public health issue thoroughly in an effort to evaluate the adverse health effects associated with consuming AEDs. Given the serious nature of this issue, the FDA has even threatened to ban AEDs if manufacturers and distributors could not prove that they were safe for public consumption.

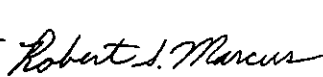
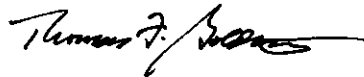
While no formal regulation has been issued yet, the FDA is currently receiving responses from 27 manufacturers and distributors and is reviewing other scientific evidence in order to determine whether caffeine can be safely and lawfully added to alcoholic beverages.

While the state and federal investigations continue, we hope you will work with us to educate all Pennsylvanians about the potential dangers that these types of products may present until they are considered safe under FDA regulations.

Sincerely,



Patrick "P.J." Stapleton
Chairman



Thomas F. Goldsmith
Board Member

Robert S. Marcus
Board Member